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Former Arizona Priest Arrested on State Sex Abuse Charges in Spain

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 4, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced that the Spanish National Police arrested Father Jorge Washington Cordova Hernandez Sunday in Guadarrama, Spain, on sex abuse charges while he was attending a seminar. Guadarrama is located near Madrid.

In 2005, Cordova, 51, was accused of sexually abusing two minors during his assignment to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Yuma from 1988 to 1991. He was indicted on 10 counts of sexual abuse, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Cordova fled to Ecuador, where his home diocese is located.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office filed a provisional arrest warrant with Spanish authorities on behalf of the Yuma County Attorney's Office after receiving information on Cordova's location. He was a presenter at a seminar being held at the Fray Luis of Leon cultural residential complex in Guadarrama.

Cordova was arrested when he came out of the facility where the seminar was being held under the pretext that a local television crew wanted an interview with him. The Spanish National Police will hold Cordova until the extradition process is completed.

Assistant Attorney General Frank Collins and Special Investigator Rene Luna are handling the extradition process. Cordova's arrest was the result of a joint investigation with the Arizona Attorney General's Office, U.S. Marshal's Service, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Yuma Police Department and Yuma County Attorney.

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